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ABSTRACT

Designed for grades 4-6, this teaching unit explores children's rights from a comparative perspective by focusing on the rights of Japanese children as revealed in a collection of stories written by Japanese junior high school students. The unit outlines a series of lessons that explore the nature of children's rights and inquire about the extent that young people in Japan enjoy those rights. The unit contains a set of 20 stories that depict the daily lives of Japanese young people. Supplementary materials include: (1) the text of the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child; (2) text of the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child; and (3) selected news articles related to children's rights in Japan and published between 1989-90. Four introductory activities and two additional activities provide ideas for working with the stories and text. (CK)

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ED 372 002

# The Rights of Children in Japan:

## A Teaching Unit for The Upper Elementary Grades (4-6)

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# The Rights of Children in Japan:
# A Teaching Unit for The Upper Elementary Grades (4-6)

> History will no doubt record that it was our century that set an agenda of human rights as a universal goal. Bringing to fruition a set of basic human rights for all peoples is at the core of life in a just society, and creating that just world calls not only for our best efforts, but also for a long-term steady, persistent commitment. . . We must educate ourselves and our children about the values and importance of human rights.[1]

## Declaration of the Rights of the Child

Children's rights issues provide a natural point of interest and an effective point of departure for educating young people about human rights. The historic agenda of human rights, which is set forth in the International Bill of Human Rights, has included special standards for the treatment and protection of children since 1959 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Both the United States and Japan signed that declaration.

A declaration, however, is a statement of principles without legally binding clauses or enforcement provisions. In order to codify enforceable international law pertaining to children and to promote children's welfare as "an issue of justice rather than one of charity"[2], a Convention on the Rights of the Child was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November, 1989. The adoption of the Convention was only the beginning of a long process whereby the Convention is entered into force and becomes part of the national law of ratifying member nations.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child became a legally binding treaty (on the ratifying nations) 30 days after it had been ratified by 20 countries. A year after its adoption, more than 40 member states, including Japan, had ratified the Convention, thereby agreeing to make the necessary adjustments in their national laws to comply with the Convention's provisions. The United States remains one of the only industrialized nations that has not ratified the Convention, reportedly because of conservative opposition to a provision that prohibits execution of individuals whose crimes were committed before age 18 and to the lack of strong abortion restrictions. A declaration issued by world leaders at the September 1990 summit on children included a commitment to work towards further ratification of the Convention by the participating nations. As this effort continues over the next decade, study and debate about guarantees for children's rights will be particularly timely in the classroom.

## Children's Rights in Japan

In Japan, children are often referred to as a "national treasure." Indulged by their families and sheltered by the watchful eyes of the community at large, Japanese children grow up in a society that believes every child has equal potential for success. Even the widely criticized examination system in Japan is predicated on the idea that determination and hard work can win anyone a place in a university. The Japanese are very proud of the equal access to education that they believe their system affords all children. While it appears that the majority of Japanese children also have adequate housing, clothing, food and health care, there is evidence that children's rights in Japan, as in most countries, are less than fully realized.

Although the Japanese government reports low rates of homelessness, the housing conditions regarded as middle class in Japan would in many cases be considered substandard by westerners. Large, extended families share small spaces in which insulation is unheard of, central heating is a rarity, and, particularly in rural areas, toilet fixtures are often unsanitary. All Japanese schools provide annual health check-ups, but tooth decay among Japanese students is a serious problem by U.S. standards. While the ubiquitous school uniforms have the advantage for children of minimizing visible class differences, they also make it easy for adults to overlook problems of poverty. Similarly, though mainstreaming in elementary school is touted as the means by which handicapped children gain access to equal opportunities, the failure to address children's special needs limits the development of their individual potential. In general, teaching strategies in Japan are not geared to the needs of individuals. Severe disciplinary measures and unyielding enforcement reflect the belief that all students are equally capable of conforming to the same academic and disciplinary standards.

At the July, 1988 convention of the Japan Teachers' Union, chairman Tadayoshi Fukuda drew national attention to the issue of human rights in the schools. Critical of rigid enforcement of strict uniform codes and widely-practiced corporal punishment, Fukuda called for parents and educators to take the rights of school children more seriously. He also advocated human rights education in the schools as a means of achieving this goal.

## Introduction to the Unit

This teaching unit is designed for students in the upper elementary grades--fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. It approaches children's rights from a comparative perspective by focusing on the rights of Japanese children as they are revealed in a collection of stories written by Japanese junior high school students. There is considerable research evidence which suggests that education about international human rights is especially appropriate for upper elementary

students because they have achieved important cognitive competencies, but have not yet developed rigid concepts and attitudes. They are receptive to learning about foreign people and capable of projecting themselves into alternative roles and points of view.[3]

In keeping with these abilities, the unit outlines a series of lessons that explore the nature of children's rights and inquire about the extent to which young people in Japan enjoy those rights. In addition to providing knowledge about the status of rights for Japanese children, the lessons may provide a starting point for discussions about your students' own entitlements as human beings and their rights as young citizens in the United States.

The unit contains a set of 20 stories that depict the daily lives of Japanese young people. Supplementary materials include: (a) the text of the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child, (b) the text of the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child, and (c) selected news articles related to children's rights in Japan, published 1989-1990. The following guidelines are designed to help you use these materials as a self-contained unit on children's rights or as a point of departure for further studies of Japan, children's rights, or other human rights issues.

## Instructional Goals

1. To contribute to an understanding of human rights as entitlements of all people everywhere, and of the special rights of children to survival, protection and development.

2. To convey knowledge about the major international human rights documents, especially the International Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the proposed Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. To promote students' interest in Japan and better understanding of the Japanese people through primary source materials which are accessible to elementary students.

4. To help students develop as global citizens by fostering an appreciation for the unity in the human community, a consciousness of alternative perspectives, and an ability to adopt a different cultural viewpoint.

5. To sharpen students' awareness of their own rights and the status of children's rights in their own communities.

6. To provide opportunities for students to become advocates for human rights and cross-cultural understanding.

## Concepts and Generalizations

The following set of concepts and generalizations are suggested to help you focus the instructional goals of the unit. Some concepts might be taught directly to introduce the

unit while others might best be defined inductively by the students as they read and discuss the stories. If students do not arrive at the generalizations through lesson activities and discussions, questions aimed at eliciting the key generalizations may serve well as a summary activity.

Concepts

A human right. . . is a right to which one is entitled by birth. The International Declaration of Human Rights, passed without a dissenting vote by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948, represents the consensus of the international community on a set of inalienable human rights to which all people are entitled.

Children's rights. . . were defined in 1959 by the international community of the United Nations in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The 10 articles include: (1) the entitlement of all children to the following rights, without discrimination; (2) the right to special protections that ensure physical, mental, moral, spiritual and social development; (3) the right to name and nationality; (4) the right to health care, nutrition, housing, and recreation; (5) the right to special education and care for handicapped children; (6) the right to love and understanding and adequate means of support; (7) the right to education and play; (8) the right to be first in gaining protection and relief; (9) the right to protection from neglect, cruelty and exploitation; and (10) the right to be protected from racial, religious or other forms of discrimination.[4]

Legal rights. . .are rights established by national law. For example, in Japan national laws grant young people: (a) the right to a free education until age 15, (b) the right to marry with parental permission at age 16, (c) the right to obtain a driver's license at 18, and (d) the right to vote, to marry without parents' consent, to be tried as an adult, and to enjoy all other rights of adulthood at age 20.

A restriction of rights occurs when a society agrees that the rights of a person or group of people must be limited for their own or for society's benefit. For example, in the U.S., the rights of criminals are restricted for the benefit of society. Children's rights, too, are somewhat restricted. For example, labor laws in Japan completely restrict children from working until age 15. From 15 until 20, the law restricts the number of hours youth can work per week, disallows work between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., and restricts the kinds of jobs youths can hold (no hazardous or unhealthy conditions).

A violation of human rights. . . occurs when any person's human rights are denied or infringed unjustly. The major human rights documents specify that the only justification for restricting a human right is the protection of the rights of another person or to benefit the general welfare of people in a democratic society.

Generalizations

1. There are different kinds of human rights--civil and political, social, cultural, and economic rights.

2. Different countries emphasize the importance of different kinds of human rights, depending on the traditions and current social and economic conditions of each country.

3. Different points of view on children's rights in different countries result in different ways of carrying out the ideas stated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

4. The rights of people, including children, are often violated.

5. The efforts of individuals can be effective in helping other people acquire universal human rights.

## Introductory Activities

Paraphrasing the Declaration

INTRODUCE the concept of "human rights" with a simple definition and a few examples. If diagnostics indicate that your class is unfamiliar with the United Nations, a brief summary of its history, purpose, and the adoption of the International Declaration of Human Rights as one of its first acts will be appropriate.[5]

EXPLAIN that the international community has agreed upon a set of special rights for children and ask the students to hypothesize what those rights might be. When they have generated a good list, introduce the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, reading it aloud and asking them to listen for the rights it proclaims. Check for comprehension. Then solicit student reactions to the Declaration and their opinions about how their own list of rights compares to it. Discuss difficult terms in the Declaration and suggest the usefulness of paraphrasing it.

DIVIDE THE CLASS INTO SMALL WORK GROUPS and have each group paraphrase one or more of the ten principles of the Declaration. Make sure that dictionaries are accessible for the project and emphasize the importance of understanding what is stated in the original principle before attempting to paraphrase it. Compile the results as the "Class Declaration of the Rights of the Child." Display it or duplicate it for use in subsequent lessons.

Which Rights are Most Important?

The purpose of this game is to familiarize students with the principles of the Declaration and also to illustrate the

importance of each one. Required for this game are envelopes containing the 10 principles of the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child (or the Class Declaration), each one on a separate slip of paper. You will need half as many envelopes as there are students in the class. Ask students to work in pairs. Give each pair an envelope and ask them to arrange the principles from most to least important. Allow about 5-8 minutes and then reconvene the class for discussion.

Ask students how they organized the principles. What were the difficulties in choosing the most and least important rights? Why was it difficult? How would your lives change if one of the rights were eliminated? The variety of students' solutions to the problem may indicate the equal importance of each of the principles, or it may lead to a discussion of how different cultures place emphasis on different rights.

Don't be Intimidated by Japanese words:
A Quick Lesson in Pronunciation Before Reading the Stories

Japanese words are very easy for English speakers to pronounce. All of the consonants are pronounced as they are in English, and the five vowel sounds correspond closely to Spanish, Italian or German vowels, roughly approximated by the English vowels:

a as in father

i as in happiness or machine

u as in Budapest or tuba

e as in bed

o as in open

While vowels sometimes occur alone, consonants except "n" are always followed by a vowel. For example, ta, mu, ni, ko, and se. A few consonants always appear as paired consonants followed by a vowel. These are: shi, chi, and tsu.

You can help students pronounce what appear to be complicated Japanese names by separating them into these syllables. For example: Mi-tsu-bi-shi
Ho-n-da
To-yo-ta
A-ta-ri.

Ask the students to think of other Japanese words that are well-known in the U.S. and practice the pronunciation by syllables before trying to pronounce the names of people and places in the stories.

## Rights of Children in Japan:
## Using Primary Sources for Inquiry and Inference

INTRODUCE the stories as a primary source of information about the lives of Japanese young people. All of the stories have been adapted from speeches written and delivered by ninth grade Japanese junior high school students about themselves for an assignment in their English class. The speeches were later compiled as a class book by the teacher. Because students wrote the speeches just a few weeks before they were to take the high school entrance examinations, there is an unusually high incidence of reporting about the pressure of studying for exams. However, various kinds of examinations are a constant feature of Japanese schooling; and from about sixth grade on, students begin to think about and prepare for the biggest one--the high school entrance examination.

Since all Japanese students begin English classes in the seventh grade, the student writers of these stories had studied English for about two and a half years. Their stories, therefore, were necessarily short and sprinkled with usage and syntax errors. To prevent U.S. students from being distracted by the unusual constructions which resulted, most of the grammatical errors have been corrected. Still, some of the sentences will sound strange to your students, who might be reminded that they were written in a "second language" by the Japanese students. In most cases, several of the very brief stories have been combined in order to develop more complete and interesting characters, and all of the names have been fictionalized. Nevertheless, the facts and the sentiments contained in the stories are genuinely those of Japanese junior high school students as they reflect on the conditions of their lives, their families, their schools and their communities.

DEMONSTRATE the processes of inquiring and making inferences based on primary sources by using Satomi's story #8 in a lesson:

(1) Focus students' attention on the topic of children's rights by asking them to recall the rights in the Declaration. (2) Ask them to listen for details in the story which might indicate the status of children's rights in Japan: Does the story contain clues about children's rights to survival? to protection? to development? How are those rights guaranteed for children? Are there indications that some rights of children are restricted?

(3) Read the story aloud to the class. Also read the glossary note on Seijin-seki at the end of the story. Explain that Japanese words are underlined in the stories and that words printed in boldface are defined at the end of the story (Many words, therefore, are bolded and underlined--and defined.)

(4) Restate the focus questions and discuss their responses. Satomi's story suggests: (a) the right to a name and a nationality, (b) the right to adequate health care in

her story of an early visit to the doctor, (c) the right to love and understanding--from her teachers in charge of the play, and (d) that legal rights are limited by age.

(5) Further questions might address how children are protected by having special status before the courts. How are "juveniles" punished when convicted of crimes? When do young people in the United States legally become adults?

SMALL GROUP WORK is recommended for further study:

(1) Divide the class into several small groups and distribute the stories among them, two or three stories per group. The group's task is to read the stories, discuss them and make inferences about the status of children's rights in Japan on the basis of the information they provide. Each group should generate a list of their hypotheses about rights provisions and limitations and the particular details upon which these inferences are based.

(2) Small groups should be encouraged to present their findings to the whole class in an imaginative way (draw pictures, role play events in stories, etc.). Other students should be encouraged to question the reports and to probe for details. Creating a master list of important points as the groups report may be useful.

(3) When all groups have shared their reports, a discussion of the findings might focus on points of agreement (confirming evidence) and discrepancies (conflicting evidence).

(4) Using the rights outlined in the Declaration as a guide, develop a profile of the status of children's rights in Japan--insofar as it is possible on the basis of information in the stories.

(5) Summary questions: Which children's rights seem to most important in Japan? Which rights seem to be most restricted? Do you think these are rights violations? Which rights did we learn the least about? How could we get more information about them? OR Which rights do you think are emphasized in the U.S.? Are there limitations? violations? Which do we know least about? How could we find out more?

FOLLOW-UP activities with the stories might include:

(a) scrambling the stories so that each group gets a different set and repeating the lesson above to see if there are new interpretations, inferences, and conclusions drawn;

(b) repeating the above lesson with a focus on the responsibilities which Japanese children have and then discussing how those responsibilities compare with those of children in the United States;

(c) making the stories available at a learning center along with other books on Japan and encouraging research and reports on topics that interest the students;

(d) brainstorming ways to find out more about the rights of Japanese children that are not well defined in the stories and organizing efforts to pursue the best suggestions (an excellent source of information would be an interview with a Japanese person, either a student or an adult who lived in Japan; news clips at the end of the unit may be helpful).

## Additional Activities

The Rights of Children in our Community

Ask each student to write a similar story, by imagining that they are introducing themselves to students in another country. Repeat the small group exercise in inquiry and inference (above) to develop a profile of the rights of children in the United States.

Discuss the rights which are emphasized in the United States. Which rights are enjoyed by all children? Which ones are denied to some? (Every major city in the United States is coping with homeless families, and children's fundamental rights are in question; AIDS and drug-addicted babies represent a new national crisis in basic provisions for love and care; corporal punishment is still legal in some states; and there are many other serious rights issues that affect children.)

What efforts are being made to improve the rights of children in the U.S.? How can people make a difference?

Help students brainstorm advocacy efforts: a poster campaign to raise awareness of children's rights in the school; writing letters to government officials who can influence legislation that affects the homeless; making friendship bracelets for children in foster care or other disadvantaged situations.

The Future of Universal Children's Rights

Summarize the events leading up to the proposed convention on the Rights of the Child. Briefly explain the difference between a declaration and a convention and the process by which a convention is ratified:

A declaration . . .is a statement of principles or goals, but it is not legally binding or enforceable.

A covenant or convention. . .is a legally binding agreement that specifies provisions for enforcement of its terms.

Entry into force . . .means that a document becomes official and enforceable in the international arena. It occurs when a predetermined number of countries have ratified it.

Ratification . . .is a two step process for a document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. First, a country agrees to "sign on," which means that the country will consider the document for ratification. In the second step, the document becomes part of the country's national law and is thereby
ratified.

Students can begin to watch for news about the actions of the United Nations or write to UNICEF for information about the latest developments in the ratification of the Convention. Further studies of the United Nations, the work of UN agencies or non-governmental organizations such as Save the Children can suggest ways that students can participate in efforts to promote universal children's rights.

## Endnotes

1. Quoted from Isebill V. Gruhn's article, "The Nature of Human Rights," which appeared in the Special Issue on International Human Rights Education of Social Education, September 1985, pp. 446-447. The entire issue is a gold mine of ideas and resources for teaching about human rights.

2. See the UNICEF Division of Information and Public Affairs Info-Paper 2 (enclosed in this packet) on "The Proposed UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for a brief history of the proposed convention and its aims.

3. See Judith Torney-Purta's review of research literature on sequence and timing in human rights education in her chapter on "Socialization and Human Rights Research: Implications for Teachers." In the NCSS Bulletin No. 68, 1982, International Human Rights, Society and the Schools, edited by M. S. Branson and J. Torney-Purta, pp. 35-48. Another outstanding collection of information and strategies for human rights education.

4. See complete text of The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (separately enclosed in this packet).

5. L. Genser provides an excellent "Student Introduction" to the United Nations and human rights in her unit on "Children's Rights and Responsibilities," Social Education, September 1985, pp. 500-503.)

## Additional Resources

Free Resources for Teaching about Japan, compiled and edited by Linda S. Wojtan. Distributed by: The Midwest Program for Teaching about Japan; Indiana University, 2805 E. 10th Street, Bloomington, IN 47405. (812-855-3838)

In the Child's Best Interest: A Primer on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, by Kay Castelle. New York Foster Parents Plan International Inc. and Defense for Children International, USA, 1985.

Looking Into the Lives of Japanese Children: An Introductory Slide Show on Children's Rights in Japan. Twenty slides with script and discussion suggestions. Send $20.00 to: Ann V. Angell, 1815 Westminster Way, Atlanta, GA 30307.

Social Education, September 1989, features a special section on Teaching about the United Nations, edited by Joanne Dufour. See "Resource Materials from the United Nations" section, compiled by J. Dufour and P. Szczerba, pp. 300-302.

## DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

*Preamble*

*Whereas* the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

*Whereas* the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

*Whereas* the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth,

*Whereas* the need for such special safeguards has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924, and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the statutes of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children.,

*Whereas* mankind owes to the child the best it has to give,

*Now therefore,*

*The General Assembly*

*Proclaims* this Declaration of the Rights of the Child to the end that he may have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good and for the good of society the rights and freedoms herein set forth, and calls upon parents, upon men and women as individuals and upon voluntary organizations, local authorities and national governments to recognize these rights and strive for their observance by legislative and other measures progressively taken in accordance with the following principles:

*Principle 1*

The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. All children, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.

*Principle 2*

The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

*Principle 3*

The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

*Principle 4*

The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

*Principle 5*

The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

*Principle 6*

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security; a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to those without adequate means of support. Payment of state and other assistance toward the maintenance of children of large families is desirable.

*Principle 7*

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.

The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavor to promote the enjoyment of this right.

*Principle 8*

The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.

*Principle 9*

The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.

The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development.

*Principle 10*

The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the services of his fellow men.

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**ARTICLE 1** - *Definition of a Child*
Every person under 18, unless national law grants majority at an earlier age.

**ARTICLE 1 bis** - *Survival & Development*
The right to life and the State's obligation to ensure the survival and maximum development of the child.

**ARTICLE 2** - *Name & Nationality*
The right to a name from birth and citizenship of the country of birth if the child benefits from no other.

**ARTICLE 3** - *Best Interests of the Child*
The best interests of the child to prevail in all legal and administrative decisions, taking into account his/her opinions.

**ARTICLE 4** - *Non-discrimination*
The applicability of these rights to all children without exception; the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination.

**ARTICLE 5** - *Implementation of Rights*
The State's obligation to translate the rights in the Convention into actuality.

**ARTICLE 5 bis** - *Respect of Parental Responsibility*
The State's obligation to respect the duties of those legally responsible for the child to provide direction in the exercise of these rights.

**ARTICLE 6** - *Parental Care & Separation from Parents*
The right to live with parents unless this is deemed incompatible with the child's best interests; the right to maintain contact with both parents; the State's obligation to provide information when separation results from State action.

**ARTICLE 6 bis** - *Family Reunification*
The right to leave or enter any country and to maintain regular contact for family reunification.

**ARTICLE 6 ter** - *Illicit Transfer and Non-return*
The State's obligation to prevent and to remedy the kidnapping or retention abroad by a parent or third party.

**ARTICLE 7** - *Free Expression of Opinion*
The right to express an opinion and to have that opinion heard.

**ARTICLE 7 a** - *Freedom of Information*
The right to seek, receive and impart information through the medium of choice.

**ARTICLE 7 bis** - *Freedom of Thought, Conscience & Religion*
The right to determine and practice any belief.

**ARTICLE 7 ter** - *Freedom of Association*
The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly.

**ARTICLE 7 quater** - *Protection of Privacy*
The right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence, or attacks on honour and reputation.

**ARTICLE 8** - *Parental Responsibilities*
The State's obligation to support parents or guardians as those with the primary responsibility for their children.

**ARTICLE 8 bis** - *Abuse & Neglect*
The State's obligation to protect children from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others, and to undertake preventive and treatment programmes in this regard.

**ARTICLE 9** - *Access to Information*
The State's obligation to ensure access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources.

**ARTICLE 9 bis** - *Preservation of Identity*
The right to preserve or re-establish the child's identity (name, nationality and family ties).

**ARTICLE 10** - *Children without Families*
The right to receive special protection and assistance from the State when

deprived of family environment and to be provided with alternative family care or institutional placement.

**ARTICLE 11** - *Adoption*
The State's obligation to regulate the process of adoption.

**ARTICLE 11 bis** - *Refugee Children*
The State's obligation to ensure special protection to children who are refugees or seeking refugee status and to cooperate with competent organisations providing such protection and assistance.

**ARTICLE 12** - *Handicapped Children*
The right of handicapped children to special care and training designed to help achieve self-reliance and a full and active life in society.

**ARTICLE 12 bis** - *Health & Health Services*
The right to the highest standard of health and access to medical services; the State's obligation to ensure primary and preventive health care, health care for expectant mothers, health education, the reduction of infant and child mortality and the abolition of harmful traditional practices.

**ARTICLE 12 ter** - *Periodic Review*
The right of children placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment to have all aspects of that placement evaluated regularly.

**ARTICLE 13** - *Social Security*
The right to benefit from social security.

**ARTICLE 14** - *Standard of Living*
The right to an adequate standard of living; the State's obligation to assist parents who cannot meet this responsibility and to try to recover maintenance for the child from persons having financial responsibility, both within the State and from abroad.

**ARTICLE 15** - *Education*
The right to education; the State's obligation to provide free and compulsory primary education, to ensure equal access to secondary and higher education and to ensure that school discipline reflects the child's human dignity.

**ARTICLE 16** - *Aims of Education*
The State's obligation that education be directed at developing the child's personality and talents, preparing the child for active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and developing respect for the child's own cultural and national values and those of others.

**ARTICLE 16 bis** - *Children of Minorities*
The right of children of minority communities and indigenous populations to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.

**ARTICLE 17** - *Leisure & Recreation*
The right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

**ARTICLE 18** - *Child Labour*
The right to be protected from economic exploitation and from engaging in work that constitutes a threat to health, education and development; the State's obligation to set minimum ages for employment and to regulate conditions of employment.

**ARTICLE 18 bis** - *Drug Abuse*
The State's obligation to protect children from illegal narcotic and psychotropic drugs and from involvement in their production or distribution.

**ARTICLE 18 ter** - *Sexual Exploitation*
The State's obligation to protect the child from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

**ARTICLE 18 quater** - *Sale & Trafficking*
The State's obligation to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

**ARTICLE 18 quinto** - *Other Exploitation*
The State's obligation to protect the child from all other forms of exploitation.

**ARTICLE 18 sixt** - *Rehabilitative Care*
The State's obligation to ensure the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation or torture.

**ARTICLE 19** - *Administration of Justice*
The right of accused children to be treated with dignity; the State's obligation to ensure the prohibition of arbitrary detention, torture, cruel and inhuman treatment or punishment, capital punishment and life imprisonment; the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a prompt and fair trial, to legal or other assistance, to be detained separately from adults, to maintain contact with family and to receive a sentence based on rehabilitation rather than punishment.

**ARTICLE 20** - *Armed Conflicts*
The State's obligation to respect international humanitarian law, to ensure that no child takes a direct part in hostilities, that no child under 15 be recruited into the armed forces and that all children affected by armed conflict benefit from protection and care.

**ARTICLE 21** - *Relative Standards*
The principle that standards contained in this Convention shall not supercede higher standards contained in national law or other international instruments.

**ARTICLE 21 ter** - *Public Awareness*
The State's obligation to make the rights contained in this Convention widely known to both adults and children.

**ARTICLE 22** - *Committee on the Rights of the Child*
Election of a Committee on the Rights of the Child to examine the progress made by States Parties in achieving their obligations under the Convention and establishment of rules of procedure.

**ARTICLE 23** - *Reports by States*
The obligation of States to submit to the Committee reports on measures adopted which give effect to rights in the Convention, and on progress made in the enjoyment of those rights.

**ARTICLE 24** - *Implementation*
The right of the specialized agencies and UNICEF to be represented at Committee proceedings; the prerogative of the Committee to invite competent bodies to provide expert advice, to request the Secretary-General to undertake studies and to make recommendations.

**ARTICLE 25** - *Ratification & Accession*
The Secretary-General as the depository of the Convention, which is open for signature and accession by all States and subject to ratification.

**ARTICLE 26** - *Amendments*
Provision for amending the Convention if approved by two-thirds of the State's Parties involved.

**ARTICLE 27** - *Entry into Force*
The Convention to enter into force after twentieth instrument of ratification or accession deposited with the Secretary-General.

**ARTICLE 28** - *Reservations by States*
Provision for States to make certain permitted reservations on specific articles.

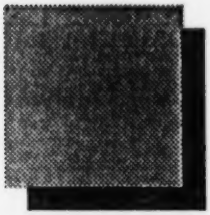
**ARTICLE 29** - *Denunciation by State Party*
Any denunciation of the Convention by a State Party only effective one year after date of receipt.

**ARTICLE 30** - *Secretary-General's Duties*
The Secretary-General to inform all nations of the names of the countries that have signed, ratified, acceded or denounced the Convention, and the date of entry into force.

**ARTICLE 31** - *Authentic Text*
Duty of Secretary-General to transmit certified copies of Convention to all States; Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts equally authentic.

unicef

## Division of Information and Public Affairs



# INFO-PAPER 2

### The Proposed UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

On February 5, 1988, the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of a Convention on the Rights of the Child finished the first reading of this Convention – one of the most comprehensive international instruments since the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. It addresses the child's economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights and defines the obligations of adults towards children. Agreement on these standards has been reached after nine years of deliberations by representatives from more than 40 countries, supported by UNICEF, other inter-governmental agencies and the INGOs.

The strategy is now to place the draft Convention before the UN General Assembly for adoption by November 1989, following a technical review, a second reading by the Working Group and review by ECOSOC.

Because it codifies the international law pertaining to children under one title, the Convention becomes an important and easily-understood advocacy tool – one that promotes children's welfare as an issue of justice, rather than one of charity. It will provide a framework within which UNICEF, other UN Agencies, NGOs and all of our allies can more easily define and promote existing and future programme priorities and will create the impetus for an alliance for action for the world's children.

The efficacy of the Convention will be proportional to the universality of its acceptance. It will be important, therefore, that the Convention be adopted by consensus in the General Assembly and then ratified by as many countries as possible. It is also important that the public becomes aware both of the Convention's existence and the provisions it contains, and that support for its principles be encouraged.

# U.N. creates historic treaty guaranteeing rights of child

UNITED NATIONS (Reuter-Kyodo) After 10 years of negotiations and controversy, the General Assembly on Monday unanimously adopted the first Convention on the Rights of the Child, thereby creating the most comprehensive treaty in history for the protection of children.

The convention draws together in a single document the key provisions of existing international declarations affecting children. It breaks new ground on adoption, survival, protection from sexual exploitation and drug abuse.

More than 38,000 children die every day from hunger, or lack of shelter and health care, and more than 100 million are estimated to be abandoned by their families on the streets of the world's cities, according to U.N. reports.

"You have taken the first seminal step . . . to furnish the world's children with the means of assuring their fundamental rights," Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar told the assembly.

A special signing ceremony will be held in January for states to ratify the convention, which then makes the provisions of the treaty binding on the signatories and requires them to report back to a U.N. monitoring group.

Twenty states have to ratify the convention before it becomes international law.

Originally proposed by Poland, the 54-article document is a finely honed compromise between various cultures and political views that leaves enough room for differences on religion, adoption and other issues. Consequently, many countries have severe reservations on some of the clauses.

Some feel the minimum age of 15 for military service is too low. Antiabortion groups wanted the fetus recognized as a person and Islamic states have their own interpretation of freedom of religion.

The Nordic countries failed to get the military age raised to at least 17 while the United States, despite major protests from citizens groups, argued that raising the combat age would undermine the 1949 Geneva conventions on that issue and should not be discussed in this forum.

On the abortion issue, a paragraph in the preamble speaks of the right to legal protection before as well as after birth, but references to the unborn child were dropped from the operative articles of the convention.

Chile and Paraguay objected strongly to this omission while the United States only mentioned it in passing, despite heavy lobbying from right-to-life groups.

In a separate issue, a number of Islamic countries, including Jordan, Iran and Algeria, said they interpreted the child's right to freedom of religion to mean it had freedom to practice religion but not to change its religion.

Despite all the cultural differences, the convention assumes that the reactions of all countries are the same when children were subjected to torture, separated from their families, deprived of food or maimed in combat.

The convention acknowledges that not only does a child have the right to be adequately nourished, but it also has the right to be properly educated and shielded from arbitrary detention, exploitation at work or abuse in the home.



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# Fifth of family spending goes for children

Most Japanese households spend an average of ¥58,000 a month— 22 percent of total expenses — on children, according to a survey conducted by Nomura Securities Co.

In a play on Engel's Law, Nomura named the ratio of childcare expenses to total family expenses Angel's Law.

The German statistician Ernst Engel stated that as a family's income rises, a smaller share is spent for food and a larger share for education and recreation.

Nomura surveyed 700 families in the metropolitan area with children of high-school age or lower.

The survey found that families with junior-high-school and high-school students spend more than most for their offspring — an average of ¥89,000 per month, or about 28 percent of total expenses.

In the survey, childcare expenses include education fees, savings and insurance payments for children, costs of daily necessities, and allowances. Tuition payments make up the major part of child-related expenses, Nomura found.

Asked how much parents should do for their children, 42 percent of parents surveyed said they would like to do as much as other parents do for their children, while 40 percent said they would spend as much as possible to provide the best for their offspring.

Fourteen percent said they minimize spending on children to teach them to be independent.

Ninety percent of parents think childcare expenses will increase.

# 1988 long-term school truancy sets record

Long-term truancy among elementary and junior high school students reached an all-time high in 1988, the Education Ministry reported Monday.

More than 42,000 elementary and junior high students were reported absent from school for periods exceeding 50 days for reasons other than illness or injury, the ministry said.

One education counselor attributed the rise in absenteeism to the increasing pressure parents and teachers place on students to succeed.

"I think children come to dislike school because parents and teachers push them so hard to get into the better schools," said the counselor, who declined to be named. As the number of students pursuing higher education increases, she said, absenteeism who probably remain on the rise.

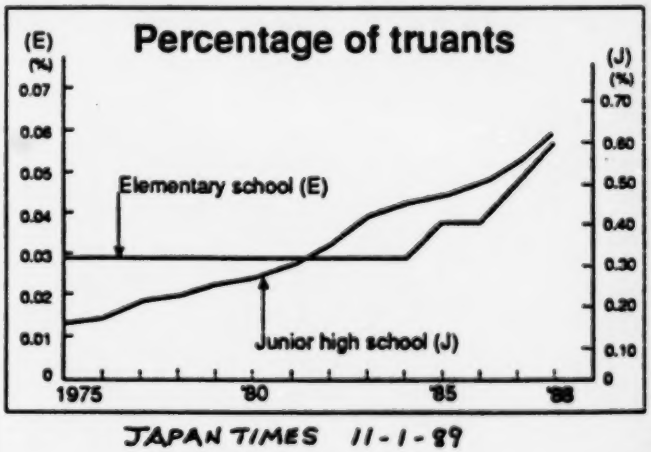
Of the 42,385 long-term truants, 36,100 were junior high students, with the remaining 6,285 being elementary pupils.

The latest figures represent a significant rise from 1987, when 32,748 junior high students missed more than 50 consecutive days of school. Elementary students falling into the category of long-term truants numbered 5,293 for that year.

More than 57 percent of junior high pupils surveyed last year said they had skipped classes at one time or another because of mental fatigue or anxiety, while 69.1 percent of elementary students queried offered similar responses.

About a third of the long-term truants returned to school during the 1988 class year after seeing guidance counselors or other consultants, the report indicated.

"Shichi go san," celebrated on Nov. 15, is a big day for children. Dressed in their best clothes, boys pose in front of the main hall of Meiji Shrine in Tokyo as their parents take them to the shrine to pray for the youngsters' good health.



## More child-welfare benefits urged

An advisory body for the health and welfare minister proposed Tuesday that low-income parents get child-allowance payments for all their children, instead of just the second and succeeding children.

Under the current system, parents who meet income requirements get a monthly allowance of ¥5,000 for their second child and an additional ¥5,000 for each of any other children until the children enroll at primary school. Parents receive no payment for the first child.

The Central Child Welfare Council proposed that parents get the allowance for all children under the age of 3.

The council is also working on details for several other recommendations to the minister. The child-allowance payment should be raised and income ceilings for recipients relaxed, it said, with necessary funds coming from deductions from workers' salaries.

A flexible nursery school system should also be established to help working women with children, the council said.

The council hopes the new system will go into effect in 1991.

The nurturing of children is important as Japan's population is aging, the council said.

JAPAN TIMES 7-6-89

HALF-NAKED CHILDREN brave the cold weather while playing on a jungle gym at Daiichi Hikari Kindergarten in Kawasaki, Kanagawa-ken.

## Half-Naked Kids Romp In Cold At Kindergarten

KAWASAKI, Kanagawa —Nearly 200 children take off their jackets and shirts to play every morning at a kindergarten here, no matter how cold it is.

Naohiro Yoshida opened the Daiichi Hikari Kindergarten in Kawasaki-ku, Kawasaki, 15 years ago with the radical idea of having the children spend their half day at the school half naked. Yoshida wanted to get the children back to nature and to make them physically and mentally stronger.

The back-to-nature school seems to be very popular with the children, who run, exercise, chat, study and have lunch in just their shorts, hats and shoes.

The high-spirited kindergarteners enjoy playing on horizontal iron bars or jungle gyms, vaulting over a pommel horse, and running around the 350-square-meter kindergarten grounds.

The biggest concern the kindergarteners have right now is winning the "hadaka" (naked) prize. This award is the highest honor the school can give, going to the child who can stand the coldest part of the winter, from November through February, without wearing a shirt or jacket.

# Korean-school students want full discounts on JR East lines

A group of teachers from Korean schools in Japan Friday filed a protest with East Japan Railway Co., demanding that their students be given the same discount on commuter passes as students going to Japanese schools receive.

About 20,000 students attend Korean schools in Japan from the elementary to university level.

Most private railway and bus lines issue students in Korean schools a student discount on commuter passes.

But going back to the days when it was part of the now privatized Japan National Railways, JR East has refused to issue the full discount to students at Korean schools.

The JR group, which includes East Japan Railway, does offer students at Korean junior and senior high schools and colleges commuter passes with a discount of 30 percent off regular fares. Korean primary school children get 50 percent off.

But the railway said the regular student passes — which offer even greater discounts — are not issued to students at Korean schools since the institutions are considered "kaku shu gakkoo," or vocational schools, in accordance with Article 1 of Japan's School Education Law.

Thus, for example, Korean primary school pupils must pay about ¥3,600 more for a three-month commuter pass between Yokohama and Hiratsuka on the Tokaido Line compared with their Japanese-school counterparts. The difference is about ¥7,100 for junior high school students.

Korean resident groups and parents of Korean-school students have protested at Japan Railway headquarters in various areas of Japan against the alleged discrimination.

JAPAN TIMES 7-1-89



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# Okazaki boy struggles for independence from school's close-cropped conformity

By CHRISTIAN HUGGETT
REGIONAL CORRESPONDENT

NAGOYA — In Okazaki city, Aichi Prefecture, uniformed junior high school students with "marugari" close-cropped hair styles are a familiar sight on Sundays.

Okazaki is noted for a policy in which almost every aspect of the students' lives is strictly controlled. Male junior high schoolers must not grow their hair longer than 0.9 cm; girls must wear untied hair in "okappa" pageboy style. Students must wear their school uniforms outside their homes even on Sundays.

Three years ago Tadashi Moriyama, 15, a student at Okazaki's Aoi Junior High School, arrived for his first day of school with his hair 6 cm beyond regulation length. His teachers kept him after school and told him to cut his hair or he would have to answer to his seniors.

The next day Tadashi's father, Akio, telephoned the teachers and warned them he would take court action if they did not stop harassing his son. The senior students cornered Tadashi in the halls and warned him to cut his hair "or else," forcing him to hide in the classroom while they passed in the hall outside.

One month later the Asahi Shimbun ran an article on Tadashi and the marugari problem. Then the harassment from seniors stopped but the Moriyama family received dozens of threatening

**Tadashi Moriyama with hair 6 cm longer than regulation**
PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN HUGGETT

phone calls, including some that reportedly warned, "Get out of Okazai or something will happen to you." Callers refused to listen to the family's point of view or were simply silent.

Akio Moriyama, head of the "marugari hantai" (anti-marugari") movement, says: "All the problems of controlled education are represented by the marugari problem. But the schools are not entirely to blame. This situation could not exist without the parents' support.

"The teachers do not focus on students' individual educational needs," he says, "instead they try to force all students into the same mold."

Teachers reportedly visit students' homes at 10 p.m. to find out who is studying. If the student's room light is off they will enter the house, take the student to his room and force him to study. They may also search the student's desk for prohibited items and take down any posters of youth idols in the room.

Teachers inspect students' luggage before school excursions to see if their underwear is the regulation white. Students are also inspected at their destinations, as they disrobe for bathing.

Tadashi has brought the marugari problem to the attention of the Japanese public through his appearance in more than 10 articles and television shows in the last three years. Although almost one-third of Japanese junior high schools still have the marugari rule, many people were unaware that it still existed.

In Tokyo the marugari rule was never adopted. In Osaka only two schools are left with the rule. Bisai, Inazawa, Inuyama, Toyota and Iwakura cities will drop the marugari rule beginning in April.

Akio Moriyama believes the rule will eventually be eliminated.

Tadashi first grew his hair because he felt the marugari didn't suit him. After studying the Constitution, he now sees the hairstyle rule as a violation of his rights.

"The school should not have the right to regulate something that is a part of my body," he says. "My hairstyle is a form of personal expression. I would be giving up my personal freedoms to the school if I cut my hair."

Tadashi almost cut his hair on several occasions but decided not to when newspapers, television and the general public supported his stand.

In a recent poll, 76 percent of the junior high school students in Okazaki opposed the marugari rule. They wondered why the rule only applies to junior high schoolers and not to elementary or senior high students.

Kiyomi Ota, the principal of Aoi Junior High School, sees marugari as a rite of passage. Children show they have become adults by cutting their hair and wearing uniforms. He maintains that longer hair hinders the students' studies and that the marugari is healthy and clean for students engaged in sports.

Still at odds with Okazaki's controlled education system, Tadashi will go to senior high school in Tokyo. As for his part in the antimarugari movement, Tadashi says: "If this problem would have taken 10 years to resolve and my stand has advanced that progress by five years, then I am happy."

His father adds, "In Japan there is a saying, 'The nail that sticks out gets hammered down.' In Tadashi's case this should be changed to 'The nail that sticks out too far cannot be hammered down.'"

JAPAN TIMES 1990



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# Burakumin Groups Unite For Human Rights Week

Three major groups fighting Burakumin discrimination have decided to put aside the "minor ideological differences" that split them over 20 years ago and unite in a national antidiscrimination campaign starting Monday, the first day of Human Rights Week.

Burakumin are a group of Japanese who have been the target of discrimination for centuries because of their traditional occupations, such as slaughtering animals or tanning hides.

Buraku Kaiho Domei Chairman Saichiro Uesugi and Zenkoku Jiyu Dowakai President Shigenori Yamada held a joint press conference Saturday morning in Tokyo and urged the government to protect Burakumin from social and economic discrimination.

In their four-point resolution the two leaders will also demand that the government include representatives of former Burakumin communities on the Regional Improvement Committee.

After the press conference, Yamada and Uesugi discussed problems facing Burakumin with Shozo Fujioka, the chairman of the Zenkoku Buraku Kaiho-undo Rengokai, at a Yomiuri Shimbun office for about 20 minutes.

This was the first meeting of the three groups' leaders since they split over ideological differences.

Although Burakumin are entitled to basic human rights as Japanese citizens under the Constitution, the deep-rooted prejudice against them remains a problem.

DAILY YOMIURI
12-4-89

# Teacher Cuts Hair Of 20 Students

AOMORI—An Aomori-ken middle school teacher punished about 20 of her students, both boys and girls, by cutting their hair with scissors Monday after they told her they had forgotten to do their homework.

According to officials at Uramachi Middle School, Katsuta, Aomori, the 51-year-old English teacher found that about 20 of 37 students in her first year class forgot to do their June 19 homework assignment.

With a pair of scissors, she then cut the hair of each student who forgot to do the assignment. The length of the hair cut ranged from a few millimeters to four centimeters.

Neither the recipients of the haircuts nor any other students resisted the teacher, it was reported.

The teacher later told reporters she had long been concerned that student hair was too long and that she thought it was an appropriate time to take measures. Parents of some of the students later told reporters they thought her action absurd.

School authorities said that none of the students whose hair was cut had locks of a length to violate this "standard."

DAILY YOMIURI 6-28-89

**ABOUT 230 KIMONO-CLAD women gather for an event at Mitsukoshi department store's main branch in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, Monday afternoon, following coming-of-age ceremonies held by city and ward offices in the morning. Like 1.88 million other young people across the country, they are celebrating turning 20, the legal age in Japan. "This is my first kimono. It took me almost two hours to dress and cost me ¥300,000, but I have a friend who spent about ¥1,800,000 for the occasion," said a college sophomore from Katsushika-ku, Tokyo.—Daily Yomiuri photo by Kuniji Shiraishi**

DAILY YOMIURI
1-16-90



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My name is Shinji Yonezawa. First I'm going to tell you about my town. My town is called Hobotsu. A long time ago, there was a Buddhist priest named Hobotsu. Now our town has his name. It's a small town. There are twenty-nine houses, but there aren't any stores. There's a vending machine, but if you put a coin in it sometimes you don't get anything. There's also a very famous green bell near my town. I'm proud of my town. Rice is grown in fields near my house. In the fall, we can hear the harvesting machines, but in winter the rice fields are covered with snow, and it's very quiet. My house is in such a peaceful place.

Next I'll tell you about my family. My father's name is Soichi. He likes golf and he plays very well. My mother's name is Ritsuko. She has a lot of money in her purse. My brother Toru is only three, but he rides the city bus all alone to his school in Matto town. Everyone on the bus watches out for him. My grandfather's name is Minoru. He doesn't have very much hair. My grandmother's name is Yoshie. Every morning she takes Toru to the bus stop and she waits for him there when he comes home in the afternoon.

Every day except Sunday I wake up at 7:20. For breakfast I eat a bowl of rice and a bowl of soup. Then I ride my bicycle to school. If I'm late I have to sit on my knees in the teachers' room, so I always try to hurry. We have four classes in the morning and two classes in the afternoon. After lunch, we all clean the school. This week my group's job is dusting the principal's office and emptying his trash. Sometimes we talk instead of work. I like the music they play for us over the loudspeakers during cleaning time. I like rock and roll very much. I want to make a band. I want to play the electric guitar and synthesizer very much. That's all. Thank you.

**Kon-nichi-wa!** I will tell you about myself. I am Tomoko Yoshida. I am fifteen years old. I like playing the piano very much, but when I was a little girl, I didn't like it very much. I started it when I was only four years old. At first I didn't know anything. I practiced it every day to be a good pianist. I took piano lessons for eleven years, but I stopped in November last year because now I am too busy at school.

I am a Takayama junior high school student. At my school we have three grades, and I'm in the ninth grade. I like this school. It is smaller than other schools, but this school has good things. First, we can know almost all the students and teachers. Next, there are few rules in our school. Girls can wear any color ribbon they choose in their hair and our socks can be blue or black or white. The boys can choose three different haircuts. And there are other things, too. Our school lunch is very delicious. Three days a week we can have bread instead of rice with our lunch. My badminton club has very nice members. We practiced hard every day after school, but now all the ninth graders had to stop before summer vacation. Because we are studying very hard to get into a good high school.

By the way, I go skiing with my friends every winter in the mountains near our town. I can't ski very well. But skiing is the greatest. But this year we didn't go to ski because I am busy now preparing for the entrance examination. And when I pass, I will take a trip during the spring vacation.

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**Kon-nichi-wa!** means Hello!

I'll speak about myself. I'm Kazunori. I was born in Mikawa, near the sea. Every year when the doctor came to our school for our health check, he said, "You are a very healthy boy." I always played with many friends, but we did many bad things, so we were always scolded. Sometimes when I didn't do my homework, my teacher slapped me and made me sit on my knees in the teacher's room. But I still enjoyed myself very much.

When I moved to Matto two years ago, I became a shy and quiet boy. Now I always get to school on time, and I always do my homework. I like to study Japanese, but I don't like social studies because our social studies teacher is very fat. He is also the judo club's teacher. English, math and science isn't in my line, but I study them every day, bit by bit, so I think I can understand them a little.

Mount Hakusan is the tallest mountain in our **prefecture**. It can be seen from my house. From September, the mountain is covered with snow. It is very beautiful all year. I'm sorry that I couldn't go to ski and couldn't meet my relatives this winter, because I had to study to take the examination. I went and worshipped at the Kanazawa **shrine** on New Year's Day. I prayed that I will try hard and pass the examination. That's all.

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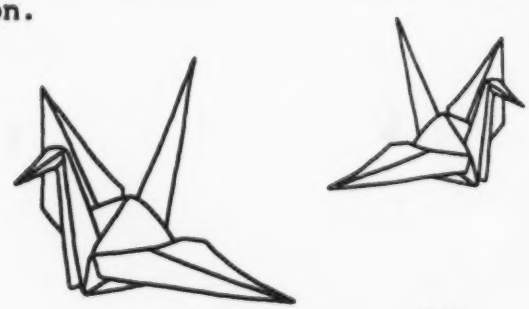
A **prefecture** in Japan is like a State in the United States.

A **shrine** is a place of worship for people of the Shinto religion.



My name is Hiromi Kitamura, and I am going to speak about my life. First I'll tell you about my Sunday. I get up at 7:30 and eat breakfast at once. Then I go to my calligraphy lesson. I don't like this lesson in winter because when I kneel at the writing table, my feet are cold. I come back to my house at 10:00. I don't like to come back very much because my mother says "study at once." In the afternoon I sleep. I go to **juku** at 4 o'clock and I come back at 7:30. I eat and study then. My Sunday is very busy.

When spring vacation comes I watch television and play family computer. It's a very easy time. This summer I took a great interest in music. I always listened to **Hikaru Genji**. But at last I was scolded by my mother because I listened to music too often and I couldn't do my summer homework. After that I studied for three of four hours every day. The subjects of the exam are so difficult that I have to study very very hard. I will try my best as hard as I can before the entrance exam.

When I was in kindergarten, I wanted to be a nurse. When I was an elementary school student, I wanted to be a hairdresser. Now I have two dreams in the future. One is getting into high school, and the other is saving money for a trip around the world some day. That's all. Thank you.

---

A **juku** is a kind of private school which many Japanese students attend after school and/or on weekends to help them prepare for examinations to enter good junior high schools, high schools or colleges.

**Hikaru Genji** is a popular rock group composed of 7 boys ages 14-20. They sing, dance and even do rock numbers on roller skates.

I'll tell you about my pet. I have a dog whose name is Chako. When I was an elementary school student, she came to my home. Four years ago she was sick, but now she is in good health. After I get home, I take a walk with her. I am too busy to take a walk with her lately. Next spring I want to play with her every day. She is very important for me because she is interesting and pretty. She is the best dog of all dogs. I think I want her to live a long long time.

My father is 42 years old. He likes Japanese chess and reading books. He is a heavy drinker. He drinks sake almost every day. Next, my mother is very kind to me. She is almost as tall as I am. I have a little brother who is in elementary school. He takes Karate lessons. He hates his school uniform because the short pants make him cold in winter. He also says his school pack is too heavy from books. My brother and I sometimes play catch. My grandfather and grandmother live downstairs. They let us watch their color television. We usually eat dinner together. My mother works very hard for us all.

I have a lot of friends. One of them is Ayumi. He is near my house and an interesting boy. Hideyaki is kind to me. He is the pride of our class. Kazunori is very popular among the students. He is the hero in our class. Shizuya and Mondo are good volleyball players. Shizuya is an attractive boy. Mondo is a brave boy. That's all. Thank you.

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**Sake** is Japanese rice wine.

This is about my future. When I was a little girl, I had nothing which I wanted to be. But there was one thing. I wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. But soon I stopped thinking that because I can't play the piano and I don't like children. Today I think about my future. I want to be a nurse. If I become a nurse, I want to be a useful one.

Now I'll tell you about my father. He likes fishing and baseball. He caught an octopus and other things. I hope my father will live long. My grandfather looks very young, but he is more than 80 years old. But he can ride a bicycle and go shopping. He sometimes calls me by a wrong name, so I am a little sad. My mother is severe. "Study hard" she says everyday. My grandmother is very kind to me. At **Hina Matsuri** she brings out the Emperor and Empress dolls and their servant dolls and arranges them in our living room with their many fine tiny things such as furniture and dishes and other household things. My favorites are the tiny vase of flowers and the tiny deck of cards. My grandmother says the peach flowers in the vase mean that I will be beautiful and gentle and have a happy marriage. I wish it will be true.

My little brother is Tadashi. He is in the sixth grade. He likes playing baseball. He is a member of the baseball club. They won a victory in the **prefecture**'s tournament and they went to the All-Japan tournament. He is trying his best, and I will try my best, too.

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A **prefecture** in Japan is like a State in the United States.

**Hina Matsuri** is the Doll's Festival, now sometimes called Girl's Day. It is held on the third day of the third month. There is also a Boy's Day--**Shobu-no-sekku**--on the fifth day of the fifth month when warrior dolls and other symbols of manhood are displayed.

I am Yukiko. I am going to tell you about my school. Today was the uniform check day. Everyone in the school was lined up in the gymnasium while the teachers examined our uniforms and shoes and our hair and looked inside our school bags. Some girls had to go home because their bangs were too long or their skirts were too short or other things. A teacher took away Shinji's comic book that was in his school bag and Yumi had to wash her hair in the teacher's sink because she had mousse in it. But rules are very important, I think.

Now I'll tell about my teachers. Mr. Kuroda is a social studies teacher. He is kind to me. He is liked by everyone. Mrs. Yachi is an English teacher. She is sometimes angry, but she is kind to me, too. She is my homeroom teacher. When the teachers have their meeting every morning, we have to take a quiz in our classroom. On Wednesdays the quiz is science, which I don't like.

In our classes we don't have to talk so much. We copy many notes into our notebooks and our teachers check them every week. They are very useful to study for examinations. After our classes we have a ten-minute rest and we can go in the hall or visit other classrooms, but we always have to return to our seats before the teachers arrive for our next class. All the teachers' desks are in the teachers' room. Sometimes I go there to ask for help with English or math. Next Tuesday we won't have any classes because it's our school's culture day. I like my school and I'm sad to graduate this year.

I am Satomi, and I am Japanese. I am going to speak about myself. I was born on January 4th. I weighed 3.525 kilograms and I was 47 centimeters tall. I was the shape of a snowman. I couldn't walk when I was a year old, so I went to a hospital. The doctor said, "She's all right," and my mother laughed. This story is hard to believe.

Now I'm going to talk about my hair. I have kept my hair long since I was a child. My hair is almost 95 centimeters now. I am proud of this long hair. But it isn't only a nice thing. For example, I need much shampoo and much rinse and it takes a long time to wash my hair and dry my hair. So I have little free time. I have been to the hairdresser's, but I have never cut much. Sometimes I think of cutting my hair before **Seijin-shiki**. But I must wear my finest kimono and my hair must be beautiful then, so I don't think I'll cut my hair for five more years.

I'll tell you about the school festival. Our drama club played The Merchant of Venice, and I got a wonderful role. When I passed the audition, I was very happy. I played the part of Portia so the teachers made a beautiful dress for me. When the dress was completed, I was moved. I thought the dress was too good for me. I was extremely nervous in the drama. I have never been so nervous. The Merchant of Venice will be full of memories for me. The end.

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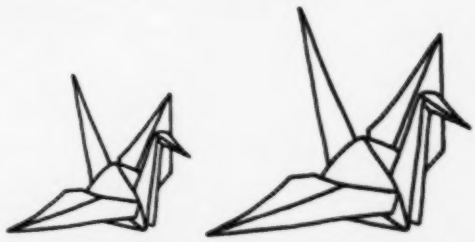
**Seijin-shiki** is a celebration to mark the 20th birthday, when a child becomes an adult, both socially and legally. At 20, new legal rights include the right to vote, to marry without parents' consent and to stand trial as an adult.



I'm Daisuke, and I'm going to speak about Christmas. December 25th is one of my favorite days. It is Christmas Day. On Christmas Day we get a present and eat a Christmas cake to celebrate. But this Christmas in 1988 was the worst. My mother said to me, "It is a very important time in your school life, so you'll have no comics, no magazines." So there was no present. The Christmas cake my mother made for us was very big. I have never eaten such a big cake. We had a very good time. My parents are very good to me. If I did not have my parents' love, I could not have grown up.

Next I'll speak about my town. We call my town Matsumoto. It has a shop and a factory. We can see the sea from Matsumoto. The sea was beautiful five years ago. But it is not beautiful now. Because the sea was spoiled by the factory. I think that's bad.

Now I will speak about myself. I have three things I like. They are movies, fishing and **ramen**. Especially I like horror movies. And I like fishing in the river because when I catch a big fish, I feel happy. But I can't fish in the sea anymore. I like warm **ramen** better than hot **ramen**. Goto said, "I will invite you to **8-ban ramen** after finishing school." I'm looking forward to it. That's all.

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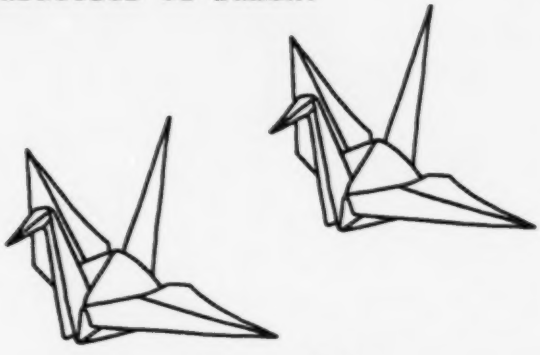
**Ramen** are thin egg noodles usually served in a flavorful soup. **8-ban ramen** is a popular fast-food restaurant that serves many varieties of ramen.



My parents named me Nahoko. I am a Japanese junior high school student. I'll tell you about our tennis club. In this club we have a lot of good members. They are interested in playing tennis, because it is very interesting. We think that our tennis club was very nice and happy. For example, we practiced tennis very hard every day. And when we were playing tennis, we usually had a smile on each face. And we won the tournament. Sometimes we were angry with ourselves, but our club's teachers were very glad for us. The last day, our club's teacher said to us, "Thank you very much. You made a nice club. I'm very glad." At that time we were very glad and happy. And we thanked our teachers. Now we want to play tennis, but we don't play it because every day ninth graders must study very hard. Next year, when we will be high school students, we will play tennis again.

Do you want to know about my favorite pet? I have a dog with black hair. My brother named her Piko. She is very small. But she has been in my home for nine years. She is the oldest in my family. She likes meat and my yellow ball. I sometimes play with her with that ball. It is getting colder and colder, day by day. So she wears a sweater and stays before a heater. Then she always sleeps with me under a **kotatsu**. She is very lovely. I hope that she will live long. My family hopes so too, I suppose.

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A **kotatsu** is a low table with a small heater attached underneath it. The floor under the table and the table itself are draped with large, thick blankets so that the space underneath the table becomes very warm. Since many Japanese houses don't have central heat, people spend a lot of time sitting at the kotatsu during the winter.

I will tell you about myself. My name is Akira. Akira means very bright like a star. I think that I am cheerful enough. I am busy doing much homework and **soroban** every day. I don't have liberty now, but I am happy every day. I don't have a girlfriend. I like the singer Yoko Minamino, and I want a girl friend just like her.

I am going to talk about last summer's vacation. My parents let us choose where to go. So I went to Disneyland in Tokyo with my brother and my parents. There were many rides, but to get on a ride, we had to wait for an hour because there were so many people. So I could not get on all the rides. Disneyland was very interesting. Next day we went to the Tokyo Dome to watch a baseball game. I was hoping that the baseball game would be very interesting. But the baseball game was not interesting. Then we rode the **Shinkansen** to go home.

When I was a little boy I liked baseball too. So I played baseball with my friends every day. I wanted to join the baseball club in elementary school, but my lottery number wasn't chosen. So I became a member of the soccer club. In junior high school I was very lucky because I could be a regular in the soccer club. I want to play soccer when I go to high school. I am studying hard for that now.

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A **soroban** is an abacus, which many Japanese learn to use expertly for math calculations. Many people can use an abacus faster than a calculator.

The **Shinkansen** is the famous Japanese "bullet train."

I will tell you about my city. I live in Nishikashiwa city. My city is beautiful because many rice fields are at the back of my house. In winter my house is very cold, but in summer it is cool because my house is near the sea.

I will tell you about the time when I climbed Mt. Hakusan. When I was in the second grade in elementary school I climbed Mt. Hakusan with my family. Unfortunately, it was rainy then, but we started climbing. The weather was so bad that it took about five hours to get to the half-way village. We stayed overnight there. Early morning of the next day we began to climb for the top. It was the most beautiful day of all. I was still sleepy, but I worked hard. When I saw the rising sun on the top of the mountain, I felt I was happy that I climbed it. I want to climb **Mt. Fuji** when I grow up.

I will tell you about my other dream. It is to go to the National Stadium to play soccer. I would like to realize my dream. But it is very difficult for me to realize it. So I have to play soccer very hard, more than other students in high schools. I think everyone has big dreams. Let's hold out for our dreams to come true. That's all. Thank you.

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**Mt. Fuji** is the highest and most famous mountain in Japan. It is 3,776 meters high, and it is one of few almost perfectly symmetrical volcanic cones in the world, with an almost perfectly circular base.

My name is Miyuki. I'll tell you about my morning. I usually get up at 6:30. I think that's early. Then I eat breakfast and put on my uniform. I do it slowly. My mother always says "Hurry up!" Soon I leave for school by bicycle with Noriko. But because it's often late, we are late for school. When we are late, the teachers are very angry. Sometimes we are slapped. When we forget to bring our math book to school, Mr. Kawanishi pounds us on the head with his book. Tomorrow we will not be late, and we will remember to bring all of our books, I hope.

I am going to speak about the basketball club. I was a member of the basketball club until I stopped to study this summer. Basketball is very very very hard. Especially training and dash. My brother said it's too hard for girls, but I like basketball very much. I was the smallest of all the basketball players. I was 139 centimeters tall. I practiced every day so I would not lose to anyone. But after all, I couldn't be a starting member. I think it was good for me to play with everyone. But there were many sad things and hard things. Mr. Sakikawa was a strict teacher and very fearful. But thanks to him we could go to the **prefectural** tournament. I was very glad. After the tournament we said goodbye to our teachers and **kohai**. At that time we were so sad that we broke into tears. I will never forget about it. That's all.

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**A prefecture** in Japan is like a State in the United States.

**Kohai** are younger students or team members.

I'll tell you about my kindergarten. When I was an infant I lived in a foreign country for one and a half years. That country's name is Guatemala. That country was very small, but there were very good places. I went to the kindergarten and I became good friends with everyone because I could speak Spanish. They were very kind to me. They gave me presents for my birthday. I was very happy because we didn't go to school on Saturdays or Sundays. I want to become good friends with other countries' people in the future.

I'll tell you about my life now. I usually get up at seven, but on holidays I get up much later than usual. I am scolded by my mother, "How long you are in bed!" I always have quarrels with my brother. As a matter of course I win. But usually I am kind to him. I also talk with him about my school life and his school life. When he was an infant he had a fever for seven days. The doctors said he would not live, but he was lucky to live. He does not walk or learn so well. Sometimes the teachers give him special lessons. But his classmates are very kind to him. They help him enjoy school like other children. From my brother, I learned that my life is very lucky. I am going to try very hard in school to do my best because I have a strong mind and body. **Sayonara**.

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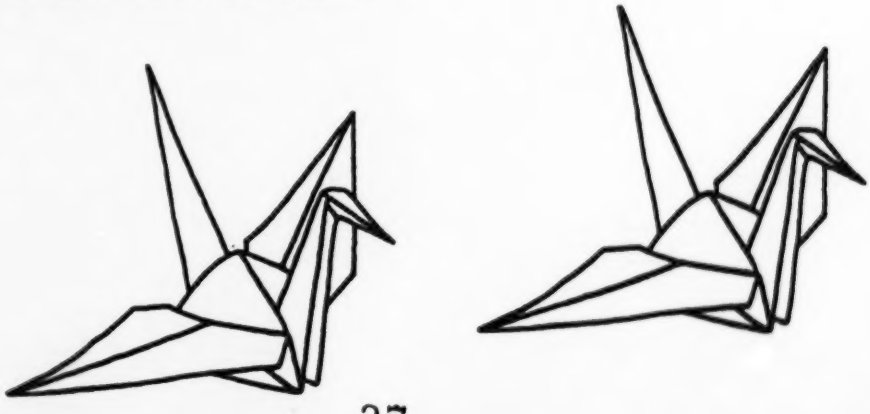
**Sayonara** means "Goodbye, see you again."



My name is Yuchio. I'll tell you about my family. There are seven people in my family. My father likes writing calligraphy and he writes very well. My mother likes to read books. My house has many books. My grandfather's name is Masaji. He is 75 years old. He is shorter than I. He likes **gateball** and cooking. My grandmother is very kind to me. So I like her the best in my family. She can cook very well. She cooks better than my mother. But that doesn't mean my mother isn't a good cook. I hope that my grandmother will live a long life.

I have a little brother who is in the second grade. I named him Nobuaki when he was born. He goes to calligraphy lessons on Saturday afternoon, but sometimes he cries because he doesn't like to go. He likes baseball. His hobby is reading comics. My sister's name is Kazuyo. She is a high school student. She had a homestay for three weeks in Oregon, USA last summer. She is a penpal with Dawn Miller now. I want to meet the Miller family. I want to go to a foreign country someday.

I have seventeen cousins. Wataru Yamaguchi is one of them. He lives in Kyoto. He is in the ninth grade. He and I are good friends. I want to see and talk to him when we become high school students. So I think we both must study hard.

I am going to tell you about our class at school. Our class is a very wonderful class. We won the championship in the chorus contest at our junior high school because we had cooperation power. We were a very beautiful and strong chorus, and our homeroom teacher is a very good teacher, too. I want our class to be even more wonderful.

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**Gateball** is a game like crochet, only played with larger mallets and balls and wickets. It is a favorite sport among retired Japanese men and women.

My name is Hajime Nakagawa. I want to talk about my family. I was born on April 6th. I have parents and one sister. My parents work downstairs in their body shop called Nakagawa. Please come to the body shop Nakagawa when your car is broken. My sister is a high school student. She isn't good at math. She gets worse and worse. My sister plays **kendo** very hard to become a police woman, because she wants to be a police woman someday. My friends are afraid of my father, but he is really kind. He likes tobacco very much and **sake** and **pachinko**. But I want him not to drink **sake** because his liver is bad. And when he drinks **sake** he soon gets angry. He is the best singer in my family. My mother likes watching **sumo** on TV. She tells us to study very hard. Sometimes at night she brings us coffee or some snacks to help us stay awake.

I'll tell you about my memory. I have pleasant memories of me and my cousin. I went to my cousin's house every summer when I was a little girl. They had many kinds of animals around the house. There were wild dogs, monkeys, cats, ducks, hens, and so on. I liked them very much and they liked me, I suppose. My cousin knew about them. He told me everything. We went fishing, swimming in the river, played with many animals, and had many adventures in a broken factory where we played. I would like to go back to my little girl days once more.

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**Kendo** is Japanese fencing with bamboo swords.

**Sake** is Japanese rice wine.

**Pachinko** is a game of chance somewhat like pinball, but played like slot machines.

**Sumo** is traditional Japanese heavyweight wrestling.

**Kon-nichi-wa**! My name is Masako. My house is a camera shop and my father likes cameras very much. He often teaches me and my friends about cameras. My mother helps him in the days, and at night she takes lessons in Japanese dance. She is enjoying it. It is the only fun for her. She is tired every day before she goes to bed. My sister is a high school student, but she will graduate from school this spring. She is very stylish, so she has many dresses and cosmetics. Lately she has been coming home late. She goes to a driver's school now. She said if I pass the entrance examination, we will go driving together. I am looking forward to that.

My uncle has been in the hospital for five days. Yesterday my mother went to see him, so my sister was going to cook dinner. But she didn't cook, so I cooked dinner. I was very good. Then I studied. I went bed at 2 today because I had to write this speech, so I am very sleepy. But I am working hard in my classes.

My hobby is collecting stuffed animals. I have about thirty stuffed animals. I like music very much. I learned the piano and the electric piano. But I must study, so I stopped learning. Of course, when I go into the high school, I will learn the piano again. That's all. **Sayonara**.

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**Kon-nichi-wa**! means "Hello!"
**Sayonara** means "Goodbye, see you again."

I will tell you about my friends. I have three good friends. Their names are Makoto, Yasuyo and Hisayoshi. Makoto is a very bad boy, but he tells interesting stories. I always play with him. Yasuyo is a body builder. He plays judo very well. Hisayoshi likes making motorcycles models and he is good at drawing cartoons. Sometimes we draw illustrations on the blackboard. They are my best friends. After lunch, we play basketball in the old gym. Playing basketball is fun.

One time Makoto and Yasuyo wore baggy uniform pants to school. It was the first day of school after summer vacation. The teachers became very very angry. They took Makoto and Yasuyo to the teachers' room and then the teachers shouted at them and slapped them in the face and made them sorry. Then they had to sit on their knees until lunchtime. They had to wear their gym pants in school for the rest of the day.

My three friends and I are planning a spring vacation together. We want to climb a mountain or go on a trip. Now we are studying hard to pass the test. Then, even though we go to different high schools, we want to be good friends. I want to see them to enjoy talking about our junior high school story and high school life sometimes. That's all. **Sayonara**.

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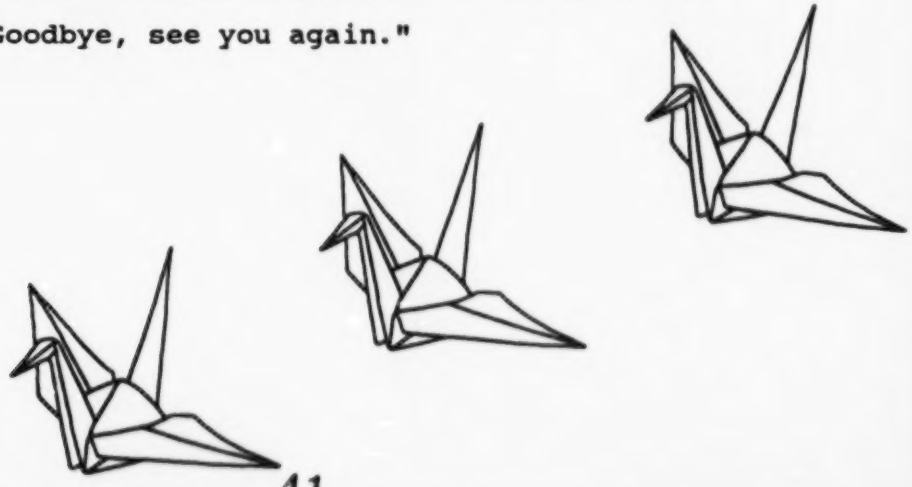
**Sayonara** means "Goodbye, see you again."



My name is Erika, and I am Japanese. I will tell you about my friends. I have many friends. Naoko is one of them. She is very kind to me, but I often have quarrels with her. But I soon make up with her. She is my best friend. Noriko is one of my best friends, too. She loves Noriyuki Higashiyama. She is precise in everything and likes cleaning. Kazuyo is shorter than I. She wants to grow up. I want to grow up, too. She likes talking with her friends. She is my best friend, too. Kazuyo goes with me to **juku** on Tuesday and Thursday nights and on Saturday afternoon. Sometimes we help each other with our homework. I think my friends love me.

When I was in the eighth grade, I was playing volleyball with my friends every day. I and my friends didn't have holidays. So we couldn't enjoy watching TV, reading magazines and studying. But we didn't stop playing volleyball. Because we had a big goal at that time. It was to win the championship in the games.

When I became a ninth grader, I had a new goal again. Getting it is very difficult. But I have to do my best to get to my goal and pass the entrance examination. I want to try my best until March.

I also have a penpal who lives in Kanazawa. Her name is Yuki Nakayama. She is a ninth grade student, too. She and I have been penpals for five years. If I can pass the test, I think I'll go to the same high school with her.

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A **juku** is a kind of private school which many Japanese students attend after school and/or on weekends to help them prepare for examinations to enter good junior high schools, high schools or colleges.

I'm going to speak about my brothers. I have four brothers. Their names are Hideki, Kazuhisa, Yoshiaki, and Toshio. Yoshiaki is 23 years old. He lives in Nigata now, and he cooks meals by himself. But he comes home every Saturday. Hideki likes motorcycles. He often goes to Suzuka to practice motorcycling. Kazuhisa likes baseball and billiard. Toshio also likes listening to music. We sometimes cook dinner together. When they get angry, they are very terrible, but they are usually kind. I am glad I have such good brothers.

My grandfather lives in Kanazawa. He went there to manage a tearoom with my grandmother. He teachers social dancing on Tuesday and Thursday. He is good at English because he learned English for a long time. He looks young for his age. He sometimes comes to my house. He is kind to me then.

My father works at NTT. He drinks alcohol more than anybody. My mother works there, too. She is learning Japanese dance at the office circle and goes to facilities for old people several times every year. My mother says, "everyone, please buy a telephone, please."

I will tell you about myself. I have lived in Matto town all my life. I like baseball. I sometimes play baseball in the park near my house. But I don't play baseball now. Because I am studying hard to get into the high school. That's all. Thank you.